

**HAWAII IRONMAN RACE REPORT
OCTOBER 2011
MIKE AND BETH LAMIE**

BETH: Mike and I had the amazing good fortune of being able to spend nearly a month in Hawaii this year – both on The Big Island and in Maui. This couldn't have happened without a number of people to whom we are extremely grateful – Cindy Cavano and Phil Brown, who covered my masters swim classes, Dave Reggiani, Mike Cavanaugh and Robin Ireland who covered our cycling classes, and Dave DeSantis and Mike and Linda Anthony, who provided home-stays.

Mike Anthony is the owner of Kona Mike's Surf Adventures in Kona, and is Mikaela's boss (although he calls *her* 'boss lady'). This is a picture of the view from Mike and Linda's house in Kona:



We arrived in Kona on the evening October 1st and Cait and Mikaela met us at the airport. I hadn't seen Mikaela in a year and I can't tell you how wonderful it was to see her tan and smiling face and to give her a big hug! She looked great – healthy, energetic and more beautiful than ever! Cait and Mikaela brought us up to Mike and Linda's lovely home in the hills of Kona, where we would spend the next couple of weeks.

For those who haven't seen Mikaela in a while, here are some pictures of her - with Cait at awards, with Cait before our road trip, with Kona Mike and Cait after stand-up paddle board, where she lives:



The next morning, Mike and I woke early and headed to Ali'i drive to race in the Path 5k, something I try to do every year, even though we aren't even close to being used to the heat! Because it was a week before Ironman, Mike did the 5k as a jog, but entered the race because it raises money for several good causes, including the YMCA. The race is partnered with Chris Lieto's organization, More Than Sport, which raises money for the kid's in Hawaii. Lieto has moved his family to Kona, and his organization is a way to give back.

Despite jogging to the finish, Mike placed 2nd in his age group, and I came in first:



Neil and Tucker Withington arrived in Kona the next day and we spent the next few days training on the course with them, and hanging with Cait as she attended to her sponsor duties at Fuel Belt, Pearl Izumi, Shimano, Quintana Roo and Rudy Project:



We also caught up with old friends, Mark Cote and Bobby Behan of Specialized:



And we went to the Parade of Nations – so low key and so fun! Mikaela drove Kona Mike’s truck and Cait was in the bed of the truck throwing out candy:



As the week progressed, we spent plenty of time swimming at the various beaches, and the surf was unusually huge! It's hard to capture in pictures, but you get the idea. Mike and Cait were hoping the huge surf would stay through the race, but no such luck:



Unfortunately, I have one sad note to report before turning things over to Mike. Mike's dad passed away unexpectedly while we were in Kona, the Tuesday before the race.

MIKE: This year's race gave me an opportunity to look beyond the training and beyond the race itself. My dad passed away the Tuesday before the race. I made the decision to stay and race and honor him in my own way:



My family – Beth, Mikaela, Cait, Mike and Kristen – and my good friend Eddie, helped me mourn yet put things in perspective. Beth and I created this memorial with coral in the lava rocks along the Queen K and in a way my dad watched the race on Saturday.

Triathlon can bring out the selfish in people – or at least self-centeredness! Although the Ironman World Championships are a race, I am not racing anyone but myself. This is my journey and whether you are ahead of me or behind me, we are still all the same.

BETH: The Friday before the race, Mike and I met Neil and Tucker at the Sheraton Keahou Bay for the carbo load breakfast at their buffet. We took our time eating, watching the dolphins and talking race strategy. No, on the aero-helmet (too hot); yes, on the swim-skin (Neil); and convincing Neil that although she felt she was ‘under-trained’, my plan was actually to have her go into the race as fresh as she could be, considering that she had had a long year of racing behind her. After breakfast, Mike, Cait and Neil racked their bikes and then sat with their feet up while I went for a 2 hour bike ride along the Queen K and then a run along Ali’i Drive. Mikaela came by to check on Mike and Cait, and then we all went to bed early in preparation for the big day ahead.

The next morning we made our way to the swim start at 5 am. Mike, Cait and Neil did a last minute check of bikes and added their nutrition to their race bags while Tim, Mikaela and I waited outside T1. Last minute hugs and kisses, goodbyes and good lucks to those racing followed by the national anthem, Hawaiian blessing and helicopters circling. The pros go off ahead of the age-groupers so at 6:15 Cait made her way to the swim start to warm up, soon followed by Mike.

MIKE: Cannon goes off. Trying to find clear water to swim. Seems like everyone is taking a free punch at my back and legs. This lasted for about 10 minutes. I decided that I didn’t want to spend the entire swim in a fist-fight with 2000 athletes, so I moved to the outside to find some clear water. Things running through my head:

1. Everyone is fast in Kona
2. New Rule: all women need to cut their fingernails before the race
3. I want to get the race # of the people punching me so when I see them on the run course I can get them back
4. Hope the zipper in my race suit doesn’t break
5. 2.4 miles is a long swim
6. Two people I wish could do this race: Jimmy Bunnell and Dan Martin

BETH: While the athletes are swimming, Mikaela runs up to the Hot Corner to get a spot to watch our athletes. Tim and I watch the swim on the Jumbo-tron until the age-groupers go off (30 mins after the pros). The pros are at the half-way point as Tim and I book it up to the Hot Corner to find Mikaela. Jesse and Chrissy Kropelnicki are with us and we find Mikaela at her usual viewing spot in a Banyan tree at the Hot Corner. The Hot Corner is so called because you see your athletes 3 times here as they make their way through a clover-leaf pattern before heading out to the Queen K.

MIKE: I see Wheeler (Pat) and we are sitting next to each other in the changing tent at T1. I figure I have 30 seconds to mess with him. “Pat, you might be the only one who didn’t punch me during the swim!” As we head out onto the bike, I think of coaching advice from Beth: If you don’t feel like you are holding back, slow down. Stay hydrated and keep fluid going in. Eat!

Not going to go on about the drafting – it would make me sound like a poor sport. 112 miles is a long ride, but in Kona it is over before you know it! I see Cait zooming down the hill from Hawi. I want to shout at her, but in Hawi you can't lose focus for a second or the wind would blow you off the road.

I don't have a computer on my bike but going up the 19 mile hill to Hawi you probably don't average more than 15 miles per hour. The head-winds are amazing! On the return I am waiting to see the airport to tell me I am almost there. Things running through my head:

1. Don't push the bike – you still have the run
2. This would be a bad time for a flat
3. I have never peed on my bike and ...
4. ... that's not a rain shower, it must be the urine of the guy I'm passing
5. Can't wait to shower
6. I owe this all to Beth
7. One more person I would chose to be racing: Beth
8. I have not talked in 5 hours. New record! This record rivals Cal Ripken, Hank Aaron (he didn't do drugs), Bob Beaman (before it was broken) and Cy Young

BETH: After we see Cait, Mike, Pat Wheeler, and Neil at the Hot Corner, Tim runs to his car and heads out to Hawi with Jesse and Chrissy. I text Tucker and he is heading back to his condo and will be zipping around on his bike after Neil starts the run. Mikaela goes for a quick nap in her truck, and I decide to go for a run along the Queen K. People are still coming out of the swim and heading out on the bike. I see them heading up Makala and along the Queen K. After a quick shower and change I catch up with Mikaela and Kona Mike, who was leading the swim support crew on surfboards. We head down to transition and while Mikaela and Kona Mike go to breakfast, I head to watch the coverage of the bike race on the Jumbo-tron. I'm not there 5 minutes before I see Tina Buchan, my friend and athlete from Texas who is in Kona with her family to volunteer for the race. While we are watching, Tim Snow is texting when he sees our people: Cait, then Mike, then Neil – all looking great! Tim says the drafting among the age-groupers is even worse than ever, and he gets a 'gesture of support' from the head referee when he goes by on his motorcycle!

Tina and I head up to the Hot Corner again where we are met by Mikaela and Kona Mike. Chris Lieto leads the pro men on the bike and Julie Dibbens leads the women. Finally we see Cait's pink helmet coming towards us on Kuakini heading towards T2. She bolts up Palani and the screams of support are deafening as she runs by us all smiles. As we wait for Mike, we get reports that Julie Dibbens is in trouble.

MIKE: Coming into T2 is so cool! You just hand someone your bike and they rack it for you. I change into running shoes and don't mind as guys put sun block on me. I head out on the run and Wow! I feel great! Now I am talking. I actually can't shut up – I'm having a blast! I see Beth and Tina at the Hot Corner. I love seeing Beth – it keeps me going. My new K-Swiss sneakers feel great! I actually don't want this to end.

BETH: We decide to stay at the Hot Corner, moving down the street a little this way and that as people we know are going by. Tina and I get separated and I know the next time I see her will be at the finish line. Mikaela and I are getting texts and calls from people watching from home, as well as from Tucker who is on Ali'i drive. They are reporting Cait moving through the field of pros and Julie Dibbens has dropped out. Tucker has seen Mike although Mike didn't see him. The next time we see Cait she is at mile 10 and looking great. As people struggle through the heat, Chrissy Wellington, Mirinda Carfrae and Cait seem to be sprinting, and Cait is actually smiling!





We get more reports of pros dropping out. We see Mike again at mile 10 and he still looks great! He always stops to give me a kiss when he sees me or says hi and tells me how he is doing. Mikaela and I jog with him a little up Palani – wow, that hill is tough!! After Mike turns down the Queen K, Mikaela and I jump into Starbucks to clean up, cool off and grab drinks. After a while we see the pro men starting to come down Palani – 2 miles from the finish. We head out to start cheering them on.

MIKE: I like to do a systems-check every mile. All good at mile 5. All good at mile 10. See Beth at mile 10. She makes me so happy when I see her. Mile 15: all good. Mile 20: all good. At mile 24 I see Tim Snow. I love messing with him, but I also realize what a great triathlete he is. As great as he is, he is also a great fan of the sport and he always gives a huge shout to those he knows when he sees them on the course. He asks me how I'm feeling and I say, "GREAT! Tell Beth I'll see her soon!"

I see Beth at mile 25. Great coach, incredible person. Best mom, best wife. Wow, am I lucky. She gives and gives. She lives this race through others. She has a gift not many of us have – she gets joy from others achievements.

BETH: After we see the first couple of pro men, Mikaela and I head down to the finish line. Craig Alexander has won again and broke the course record! The helicopters are circling like crazy now and soon we hear the first woman is heading in. Even though Chrissy Wellington had a so-so swim and came in 3rd or 4th on the bike, her second fastest run of the day propelled her to the lead. Shortly after, Mirinda Carfrae comes in. The pro women start coming in fast! In fact, the top 10 women finished within 20 mins of each other. They are saying the first American is coming in but they don't say who it is. Everyone is saying it's Cait, but we can't see her. Tim is texting us and says he don't think he will make it to the finish in time. Mikaela and I are losing our minds! Being top 10 is so important, will she make it?

We are less than a mile from the finish but Mikaela is going to head towards the finish and I am going to head towards Cait. I hear people in the crowd saying, "Cait Snow is coming!" I see Heather Wurtele and 15 seconds later Cait. "YEAH CAIT! GO!" I'm screaming and jumping up and down. I start running back towards the finish line to let Mikaela know she is coming but Mikaela has already started running to get behind the finish line. Cait sees me and gives a tiny wave. She is very focused, trying to hang on as she is all out, and trying to pick her way through the crowd. The finish area is not barricaded, and the crowd closes in like the Tour de France.

If we have counted right, she is 9th. Suddenly we hear Mike Reilly say, “Wow! Here comes Cait Snow! Top American!” I blast through the crowd like I’m Jason Bourne and cut through the King Kam hotel sprinting through the lobby and out to the finish line just as Cait is emerging through the chute with Mikaela. Cait had waited at the finish for Virginia Berastagui who was 10th pro. Tim is now here also. Lots of big hugs and we hang out a bit and watch people come in before Tim and I decide to head back out on the course. Tim goes directly up to wait just outside the Energy Lab, and I walk the course backwards. Along the way I see Cait’ QR sponsors and chat with them a bit. They are thrilled with her race. Great people.

As I am heading to Hot Corner and up Palani, I see Mark Allen and we walk the course backwards ‘together’. I get a text from Tim who says he sees Mike and he looks “GREAT”. I start to jog up the hill and then I see Mike! Huge smiles and hugs and I tell him I will see him at the finish. He has 2 miles to go and is running well, but I have a short cut so I sprint down the hill and through the King Kam again. I get to the finish line and see Tina volunteering. A few seconds later I see Mike looking tired but great. We hang out behind the finish line for a while waiting as other athletes finish. We get updates on Neil from Tucker and from smart phones. Neil ends up finishing 3rd in her age group again – amazing!



MIKE: I see the finish. Emotions are everywhere. Tears in my eyes. Don’t know why this happens. I tell myself don’t fight your emotions – feel them. I hear, “Mike Lamie! YOU are an Ironman!” I never tire of hearing this and hope it never gets old. I see Beth and get a hug. Best part of the day! I see Cait, all showered. She finished 9th overall – top American. Time of 9:17. Still, she’s more concerned about my race. This kid is an amazing person. As I tell everyone, she is a better person than athlete. That’s saying a lot!



I want to thank Beth, Mikaela, Cait, Kristen and Mike. This would mean nothing without all of you. Like the journey of Ironman, life takes a similar path. I am a rich person, though not in money (Ironman takes care of that).

Other people I want to thank:

- All the people back home who watched the race, sent good luck wishes, and listened to my random ramblings on the bike
- My new friends in Texas: Buddy, Trish and their kids, Robert Botard, Tina. I'm grateful that we can all share our special moments
- Kona Mike and Linda. You two are special people. You opened your house to Cait, Beth and me. You opened your hearts as well. It's amazing as you go through life that you actually start to figure out what is important. Eddie would go. Mike and Linda would go. PS: I miss the dogs.